

A LEG-ANKLE-FOOT EXERCISE ASSEMBLY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

This invention relates to an assembly structured to strengthen, rehabilitate and/or generally exercise predetermined portions of the user's body including the ankle, foot, leg, knee and associated portions thereof, through the provision of a platform, to which the user's foot is secured, and wherein the platform is configured to rotate or otherwise move, concurrently or independently through any one of a plurality of paths of movement including three orthogonal axes of rotation, dependent on which predetermined portion of the user's body the exercise is intended to be concentrated.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RELATED ART

In recent years there is been an ever increasing tendency for the general population to follow a healthier life style in an effort to improve a person's general well being and also to improve ones appearance. Such an improved life style frequently incorporates a low fat diet in addition to an increased amount of physical activity in the form of exercise. In typical fashion, an exercise regiment undertaken by most individuals who are concerned with their overall well being, includes

1 cardiovascular type exercises. In addition, many individuals
2 are concerned with the development of specific muscle groups or
3 areas of the body, which require rehabilitation or where fat
4 deposits have collected. In order to perform the required
5 exercises in a more efficient and convenient manner, different
6 types of exercise equipment have been developed. Such equipment
7 is typically designed to facilitate the performance of specific
8 exercises which concentrate on predetermined areas of the body,
9 dependent on which portion of the body or specific muscle group
10 a person wishes to develop.

11 Numerous exercise assemblies of somewhat conventional
12 design are known and commercially available and typically
13 include springs, flexible material bands, weights and/or elastic
14 resistance elements. Such conventional resistance structures
15 are normally connected to a plurality of different attachment
16 members and/or platforms designed to support or otherwise engage
17 the user of the apparatus in a predetermined, intended manner.
18 In addition, known or conventional exercise assemblies are often
19 designed and structured to allow the performance of one or more
20 exercises in a manner which hopefully provides the most benefits
21 to the muscle groupings or other portions of a user's body which
22 require strengthening, rehabilitation or general exercise. In
23 addition to the above, as part of certain known or conventional
24 exercise assemblies, utilization of substantially large and
25 somewhat fixed apparatus is sometimes required. Such apparatus,

1 while generally not being motorized, frequently includes
2 relatively complicated or sophisticated structural components,
3 which are designed and structured to facilitate performance of
4 a specific exercise or movement of the body. Conventionally,
5 large or more permanent type of apparatus usually includes some
6 type of support platform having sufficient structural integrity
7 to support at least a portion, if not all, of the user's weight
8 so as to orient the user in a position which facilitates
9 manipulation of a predetermined resistance assembly.

10 The industry associated with the design and manufacture of
11 exercise equipment has made certain concerted efforts to develop
12 a wide variety apparatus and/or equipment in an effort to
13 satisfy the various segments of the consuming public concerned
14 with the development of different portions of the body. Such
15 "specialized" equipment varies significantly, at least from a
16 structural standpoint, since the exercise intended to be
17 performed is designed to be concentrated on a specific area of
18 the user's body.

19 By way of example, there are currently in use many devices
20 designed specifically for the exercise of the lower leg,
21 including the foot, ankle, and associated muscle groups or joint
22 portions of the user's body. Typically, such devices are
23 portable in nature and include some form of pulling force or
24 stress being applied to the foot, ankle or leg portion by the
25 user, either by manually applying such forces or utilizing some

1 type of related resistance device, such as the types discussed
2 above. Other known or conventionally structured exercise
3 devices, which are particularly aimed at the exercise or
4 strengthening of the lower leg, ankle, foot, etc., may
5 incorporate more mechanized features which concentrate the
6 application of resistance forces to more specific areas of this
7 portion of the user's body. It can be appreciated that devices
8 specifically designed to rehabilitate, strengthen or generally
9 exercise the lower leg portions of an individual's body, as
10 outlined in more detail above, may assume a wide variety of
11 other structural configurations. This is at least partially due
12 to the fact that the human foot is capable of a wide range of
13 motion because of the unique structure of the human ankle joint,
14 foot and lower leg. The primary motion provided by the ankle
15 joint is dorsal and plantar flexion. In performing plantar
16 flexion, the foot is rotated about the ankle joint in a manner
17 which moves the toes downward, below the ankle. This is
18 accomplished when a person stands on a their toes. In a dorsal
19 flexion one foot is pivoted about the ankle joint to draw the
20 toes upward above the heel. The ankle joint also permits
21 limited motion in inversion and eversion. In inversion, the
22 soles of both feet move towards each other as when both feet are
23 inverted simultaneously. In addition the foot and ankle joint
24 may be rotated about an axes extending about the ankle joint and
25 heel by action of the tibia and fibula, which are the bones

1 forming the lower leg.

2 Due to the obvious versatility in the range of motion, it
3 can be appreciated that proper exercise directed towards the
4 lower leg, ankle, foot, knee, etc. could best be accomplished by
5 an improved exercise assembly, which is capable of directing the
6 foot, preferably under the application resistive force through
7 a plurality of different movements which may include some or all
8 of the three orthogonal axis of rotation (x, y & z). Each such
9 movement would preferably vary, at least to the extent of
10 concentrating forces or stresses, resulting from the motion of
11 the foot, on the predetermined joints, muscle groupings or
12 associated portions of the area of the user's body, which
13 require exercise, strengthening or rehabilitation.

14 To date none of the conventional known and relatively
15 unsophisticated exercise devices are capable of performing
16 beneficial exercises in an effective and efficient manner and
17 with sufficient versatility such that various ones of the
18 different muscle groupings, joints, or related portions, etc.,
19 may be specifically targeted.

20 21 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

22 This invention is directed towards an assembly structured
23 to exercise predetermined portions of the user's body, including
24 the leg, ankle and foot portions, as well as the joints, muscle
25 groupings and other parts of a person's body associated

1 therewith. The structural and operative features of the
2 exercise assembly of the present invention allow for the
3 strengthening, rehabilitation and/or general exercise of
4 intended body portions, by directing the foot, ankle and lower
5 leg through different motions or "paths of movement", each of
6 which has an at least partially different configuration,
7 dependent on the specific area or part of the user's body on
8 which the exercise is to be concentrated. More specifically,
9 the paths of movement, set forth above, include but are not
10 necessarily limited to the conventional orthogonal axis of
11 rotation comprising the x axis, y axis and z axis. Further, the
12 range of movement of the platform is deliberately set to extend
13 beyond the "normal" range of movement of a particular joint in
14 order that the joint or portion of the foot, ankle, leg, knee,
15 etc. on which the exercise is concentrated, may be additionally
16 expanded or a corresponding portion of the user's body may be
17 additionally strengthened to increase his ability to perform
18 functions or movements involved in ones activities, including
19 sports, exercise, work, etc.

20 More specifically, the exercise assembly of the present
21 invention comprises a base generally in the form of a supporting
22 plate or like structure which may be removably positioned on a
23 horizontal supporting surface or otherwise mounted on a track
24 like structure, again dependent on the specific application of
25 the exercise assembly. The platform is movably attached in

1 supported relation on the base by means of a support assembly.
2 The platform is dimensioned and configured to receive, and at
3 least partially support, at least one foot of a user of the
4 subject exercise assembly. The support assembly preferably
5 includes at least one support structure capable of supporting
6 the platform thereon in outwardly and/or upwardly disposed,
7 substantially suspended relation to the base. More specifically,
8 the support structure preferably comprises a one piece structure
9 having a semi- circular configuration formed of a steel or like
10 material which may or may not be at least partially flexible,
11 but which is disposed and structured such that its free ends
12 engage the platform and a mid portion of the curvilinear length
13 of the semi-circular configuration is secured to the base so as
14 to universally move therewith through the various axes of
15 rotation, as set forth above. The disposition and
16 configuration of the support member or structure facilitates its
17 alignment in corresponding relation to the transverse axis and
18 rotational anti-lateral axis corresponding to the movements of
19 the ankle. The curvilinear or semi-circular configuration of
20 the support structure is such that its diameter corresponds to
21 or aligns with the true center of articulation of the ankle
22 joint. In further descriptive terms, the diameter of the semi-
23 circular configuration of the support member crosses through or
24 co-extends with the rotational or bending movement or extension
25 of the ankle during its various positions of rotation. The

1 support structure allows the versatility of movement, as set
2 forth above, due at least in part to its configuration and its
3 placement in the frontal plane, thereby allowing movement both
4 clockwise and counter clockwise in a horizontal plane of
5 rotation. Further, the diameter of the semi-circular support
6 structure is disposed to co-extend with the anti-posterior axis
7 of the ankle. In addition, the support structure can be rotated
8 in the horizontal plane, as set forth above, which permits the
9 movement of rotation of the knee and ankle along the
10 longitudinal axis of the lower leg portion. This allows the
11 determination of the initial position of the angular relation of
12 the thigh to the leg as well as the leg to the ankle and the
13 programing or re-establishment of such movements or positions
14 relative to one another, as will be described in greater detail
15 hereinafter. Accordingly, the support structure of the support
16 assembly allows the user to exert certain forces or pressures
17 directly on the platform as the foot, ankle, knee and lower leg
18 are directed to travel through any one of the aforementioned
19 plurality of paths of movement and/or about the various axes of
20 rotation. At the same time, the support assembly is
21 cooperatively structured with other components of the exercise
22 assembly to provide a beneficial amount of resistance to the
23 forced travel of the platform, in order to further strengthen or
24 otherwise rehabilitate the muscles, joints, etc. associated with
25 the lower leg, ankle, and foot.

1 In at least one preferred embodiment of the present
2 invention, motive force applied to the platform is accomplished
3 by movements and forces applied to the platform by the user,
4 rather than by any exterior motor or driver. In doing so the
5 user places his or her foot on the platform and, dependent upon
6 the joint or portion of the user's body to be exercised and/or
7 strengthened, the user moves the platform through predetermined
8 or prescribed path of movement which may include one or more of
9 the aforementioned three axes of rotation. Range of movement is
10 also determined by the user. However, as set forth above, the
11 range of movement of the exercise assembly of the present
12 invention is such that the user may force the one or more joints
13 being exercised to be extended beyond the "normal" range or
14 ranges of movement with the associated joint or joints in order
15 to deliberately increase such range of movement for a given
16 joint or joints and/or to additionally strengthen the joint.
17 The various joints are thereby allowed to exceed what may be
18 considered a normal range of movement or endure increased stress
19 on a specific joint or portion of the user's body.

20 In accomplishing such movements along the aforementioned
21 prescribed paths of travel a certain amount of predetermined
22 resistance, tension or stress may be placed on the platform, and
23 accordingly the portion of the user's body being exercised,
24 through the provision of at least one but in certain embodiments
25 a plurality of weights attached to the platform. As will also

1 be described in greater detail hereinafter, the one or more
2 weights may include an elongated mounting or connecting arm and
3 one or more weight members attached to an outer most end
4 thereof. The actual weight members are disposed laterally
5 outward in anyone of a variety of angular orientations from the
6 platform. The plurality of weights, including the corresponding
7 connecting arms and weight members are fixed to the platform
8 positions at least partially determined by the various movements
9 or paths which the user forces the platform, during the exercise
10 procedure.

11 In addition to the above interconnected mechanical linkage
12 associated with the base and/or the support assembly allows
13 movement of the platform, under the control of the user,
14 relative to the base through what may be broadly or generally
15 defined as a "universal" range of motion, which includes but is
16 not limited to the three orthogonally disposed axes of rotation,
17 as set forth above.

18 It should be further noted that in yet another embodiment
19 of the present invention, at least one but preferably a
20 plurality of individual drive motors, which may be electrically
21 powered, may also be interconnected and define what may
22 generally be termed as a drive assembly. Movement of the
23 platform is thereby facilitated and controlled, with the users
24 foot attached thereto, through a predetermined or prescribed
25 path of movements, again dependent upon the portions of the

1 users body intended to be exercised or strengthened. In such an
2 embodiment three individual electric motors may be utilized,
3 each motor being associated with the three orthogonal axes of
4 rotation. A "universal" range of motion through which the
5 platform and the foot of user may pass is thereby facilitated.
6 The three drive motors may further be structured to vary or more
7 specifically extend the range of motion of any or all of the
8 joints or body portions associated with the knee, ankle, foot,
etc.

10 The exercise assembly of the present invention further
11 comprises a sensor assembly which, in at least one embodiment,
12 includes a plurality of sensors, each interconnected to the
13 platform and/or support assembly and cooperatively structured
14 therewith to determine movement of the platform relative to a
15 different one of a plurality of predetermined axes of rotation
16 which, for purposes of clarity, may be considered reference
17 axes, collectively oriented in an orthogonal relation to one
18 another. The plurality of sensors are concurrently operative
19 and, as set forth above, cooperatively structured to sense
20 movement of the platform through the aforementioned
21 substantially universal range of motion. Further, the sensors
22 may be incorporated for use with a processor and/or computer
23 assembly for processing the sensed data and storing the data so
24 that is able to accessed and used to program a plurality of
25 "duplicate" movements of the platform, with the users foot

1 mounted thereon, for subsequent use. Also the processor and
2 computer assembly may incorporate some type of graphical, video
3 or other type of display which allows the user to view the
4 pattern of movements as well as the range of movements of the
5 prescribed exercise procedure on a real time basis.

6 Therefore, the exercise assembly of the present invention
7 provides a versatile, reliable and precisely adjustable means of
8 exercising the predetermined portions of an individual's body
9 including the leg, ankle and foot portion, as well as the muscle
10 groupings, joints, etc. associated therewith. The strengthening
11 rehabilitation and/or general exercising of these predetermined
12 portions of the user's body is thereby efficiently accomplished.

13 These and other features and advantages of the present
14 invention will become more clear when the drawings as well as
15 the detailed description are taken into consideration.

16 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

17
18 For a fuller understanding of the nature of the present
19 invention, reference should be had to the following detailed
20 description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings
21 in which:

22 Figure 1 is a perspective view of the exercise assembly of
23 the present invention including a schematic directional arrow
24 representative of at least one path of movement, capable of
25 being performed by the subject exercise assembly;

1 Figure 2 is a side perspective view of the embodiment of
2 Figure 1;

3 Figure 3 is a front perspective view of the embodiment of
4 Figure 1;

5 Figure 4 is a top perspective view of the embodiment of
6 Figure 1;

7 Figure 5 is a lower, side perspective view of the
8 embodiment of Figure 1; and

9 Figures 6, 7 and 8 are schematic representations, including
10 directional arrows of some of the plurality of different paths
11 of movement which may be performed by the exercise assembly of
12 the present invention.

13 Figure 9 is a schematic representation of the various
14 components of the exercise assembly of the present invention
15 relative to the orthogonally disposed axes of rotation.

16 Figure 10 is a schematic representation of the three
17 orthogonal axes of rotation incorporating a drive assembly which
18 forces the exercise assembly through a predetermined or
19 prescribed path of movements.

20 Figure 11 is a schematic representation of a sensor
21 assembly used in combination with processor/computer and/or
22 display facility for informing the user of the path and range
23 movements on a real time basis.

24 Like reference numerals refer to like parts throughout the
25 several views of the drawings.

1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

2 The present invention is directed towards an assembly
3 structured to exercise predetermined portions of a user's body
4 which includes the lower leg, ankle and foot, as well as parts
5 of the body associated therewith, including related muscles,
6 joints, etc. In performing such exercise, a foot, and as a
7 result, the ankle and lower leg, are directed through at least
8 one but preferably a plurality of different movements. For
9 purposes of clarity the individual movements through which the
10 indicated body portions are forced to travel will herein be
11 termed "paths of movement". Such terminology is believed to be
12 appropriate since the movements through which the predetermined
13 body portions are directed include specifically configured
14 paths, which serve to rotate the foot and ankle joint, as well
15 as the knee, lower leg, thigh, etc. relative to a plurality of
16 axes of rotation. Also, by way of explanation the referred to
17 axes of rotation may be relatively disposed in an orthogonal
18 relation to one another so as to be more specifically defined as
19 a typical x, y, z, set of axes.

20 With reference to the accompanying Figures, the exercise
21 assembly of the present invention is generally indicated as 10
22 and includes a platform 12, having an elongated configuration
23 and being otherwise sufficiently dimensioned and configured to
24 receive and at least partially support a foot of the user,
25 generally indicated as 14, thereon. The exercise assembly 10

1 further includes a base, generally indicated as 16, which may
2 serve as a support platform or like structure, and which is
3 designed to support the remainder of the exercise assembly 10 on
4 an appropriate, substantially horizontal surface.
5 Alternatively, the base 16 may include a plurality of rollers,
6 wheels, etc. (not shown for purposes of clarity) so as to allow
7 movement of the base 16 relative to the surface on which it is
8 positioned. Another embodiment of the base 16 includes
9 applicable structure associated therewith which allows it to be
10 selectively positioned along the length of a track assembly.
11 The track assembly comprises one or more elongated tracks
12 generally indicated as 18 and shown in Figure 1.

13 The platform 12 is movably interconnected and supported on
14 the base 16 by means of a support assembly 20. The support
15 assembly 20 preferably includes a support structure preferably
16 comprising a single one piece member formed of steel or like
17 material and including two segments 22 and 24. Each of the
18 segments 22 and 24 have corresponding proximal ends integrally
19 or otherwise fixedly secured to one another to define a semi-
20 circular configuration. A mid-portion of the support member 20
21 is secured to an interconnecting yoke 26. The opposite or
22 distal ends 22' and 24' of each of the support segments 22 and
23 24 are secured in spaced, substantially opposing relation to one
24 another, as they are attached to opposite sides of the platform
25 12. By virtue of this structural configuration, the platform 12

1 is disposed in an upwardly suspended position relative to the
2 base 16. The support assembly including the support segments 22
3 and 24 are preferably formed from a high strength, light weight
4 steel or like material and may or may not be at least partially
5 flexible. Accordingly, when the foot 14 of the user is secured
6 to the platform 12 while it is being directed through one or
7 more of the aforementioned paths of movement, a substantially
8 downward force may be directed onto the exercise assembly 10, by
9 the user's foot 14. Such force is effectively absorbed by the
10 support assembly 20, generally, and by the one piece, integrally
11 secured support segments 22 and 24, specifically. It should be
12 apparent therefore that the platform 12, with the foot of the
13 user 14 attached thereto, may or may not "flex" both towards and
14 away from the base 16 during the forced or directed movement of
15 the platform 12 with the foot 14 attached thereto.

16 The exercise assembly 10 of the present invention also
17 comprises a coupling mechanism, generally indicated as 30, which
18 is connected to the base 16 and extends outwardly therefrom.
19 The coupling mechanism 30 preferably comprises an appropriate
20 mechanical coupling and/or linkage which allows the platform 12
21 to "universally" move relative to the base 16, as will be
22 described in greater detail hereinafter. A coupling member 36
23 and supporting shaft 38 serves to interconnect and support the
24 coupling mechanism 30 relative to the lower housing 34, such
25 that the coupling member 36 is connected to the support assembly

1 20, generally and to the middle or yoke portion 26,
2 specifically, which, as set forth above, is attached to the
3 segments 22 and 24 of the support assembly 20. Movement of the
4 platform 12 through the various paths of movement, to be
5 described in greater detail hereinafter, is preferably
6 accomplished by manual force generated by the user of the
7 device. Such manual force in turn causes the coupling member
8 36, as well as the support assembly 20, to move with the
9 platform 12. The universal movement of the platform 12 and its
10 range of motion may be varied. Also the actual range of motion
11 of the platform 12 may be extended beyond the "normal" range of
12 the motion of each of the effected joints or body parts being
13 exercise or strengthened.

14 While one preferred embodiment of the present invention
15 provides manual force to the platform, thereby allowing the user
16 to move the platform through the predetermined or desired paths
17 of movements as set forth above, another embodiment of the
18 present invention includes a drive assembly which is generally
19 indicated as 40. The drive assembly includes at least one but
20 preferably a plurality of electrically powered drive motors 42,
21 44, 46, etc. The actual number of drive motors 42, 44, 46, etc.
22 may vary but in at least one preferred embodiment of the present
23 invention, when such drive motors are utilized, at least one is
24 provided to facilitate rotation about each of the aforementioned
25 orthogonally disposed rotational axes. More specifically, the

1 one or more drive motors 42, 44, 46 are individually or
2 collectively coupled by conductors 33 to a power source, such as
3 but not limited to power source 94 in Figure 11. As
4 schematically represented in Figures 9 and 10 the drive assembly
5 40 may serve to regulate movement of the platform 12 about each
6 of the intended axes of rotation concurrently or independently
7 of one another, wherein such orthogonal axes comprise the x
8 axis, y axis and z axis, as indicated. By way of example and
9 with reference to Figures 9 and 10, each of the individual drive
10 motors 42, 44, 46, may be disposed and structured to regulate
11 travel or movement of the platform 12 relative to a particular
12 one of the x, y, or z axes of rotation. It should be noted,
13 however, that the paths of movement of the platform are not
14 limited to specific and independent rotational movement relative
15 to the aforementioned orthogonal axes but may involve a more
16 complex movement of the platform. Further, and as will be
17 explained with reference to Figure 11, the plurality of drive
18 motors 42, 44, 46 may be pre-programed or otherwise controlled
19 so as to duplicate a path of movement which has been previously
20 stored and programed into a processor 100 associated with a
21 sensor assembly, to be described hereinafter. Therefore,
22 activation of the plurality of drive motors 42, 44, 46 in
23 combination with a pre-programing or responsive, operative
24 interconnection to the processor 100, serves to regulate
25 movement of the platform 12 by periodic and/or sequential

1 activation of the various drive motors 42, 44, and 46. Any of
2 an almost infinite variation and number of paths of movement may
3 be accomplished through activation of the drive assembly 40.
4 Also, the range of motion of the platform 12 is concurrently
5 regulated as it is being directed through each of the paths of
6 movement.

7 As related the term "range of motion" may be more precisely
8 defined by the actual length or degree of travel through which
9 the platform 12, and the foot attached thereto, are directed by
10 the cooperative structuring and operation of the drive assembly
11 40 with other of the components of the exercise assembly 10 of
12 the present invention, as set forth herein. Regulating and/or
13 determination in terms of pre-programing or pre-setting the
14 various components of the exercise assembly 10 of the present
15 invention may serve to predetermine and regulate particular
16 paths of movement as well as the aforementioned range of motion
17 demonstrated by the platform 12. Further, as also set forth
18 herein the actual range of motion may be somewhat extended
19 beyond what is considered to be a normal range of motion of each
20 of the individual body portions of joints, including the foot,
21 ankle, knee, lower leg, thigh, etc. in order that the "normal"
22 range be expanded.

23 Further with regard to Figures 9 and 10 the schematic
24 representation shown therein further emphasizes the orthogonally
25 oriented axes of rotation and also the plurality of drive motors

1 42, 44, and 46 which control rotation or the various paths of
2 movement which the platform 12 may assume upon activation of the
3 various motors 42, 44 and 46. As clearly set forth in these
4 Figures and described in detail above, the respective drive
5 motors 42, 44, and 46 may or may not be interconnected and/or
6 may be individually and/or collectively responsible for rotating
7 the platform about the various x axes, y axes and z axes.

8 As disclosed in Figure 11, another feature of at least one
9 embodiment of the present invention may include a sensor
10 assembly including a plurality of preferably electrically
11 powered sensors 90, 91 and 92 each electrically connected to
12 some type of power source 94. The power source 94 may also be
13 use to provide electrical energy to the various drive motors 42,
14 44, and 46 in the embodiment of Figures 9 and 10. In any event
15 the plurality of sensors which may vary in number from one
16 sensor to three or more sensors are strategically interconnected
17 with remaining components of the exercise assembly 10, so as to
18 limit the range of motion and/or the duration of travel and/or
19 rotation of the platform 12 about the various orthogonal axes of
20 rotation or the other paths of movement, as described above.
21 Once this motion, rotation, movement, etc. is sensed the
22 determined data may be sent to a processor or computer assembly
23 100 for storage and/or processing. The processor/computer 100
24 may be further structured to be accessed so as to retrieve the
25 stored data received from the plurality of sensors 90, 91, 92,

1 and thereby duplicate any of the large number of paths of
2 movements which may be traveled by the platform and which may be
3 preferred based on the rehabilitation, exercising or
4 strengthening of a given part or parts of the user's body.

5 Also a display facility 102 may be provided and which is
6 responsive to the data received from the processor/computer 100
7 for the real time, visual display of the paths of movement that
8 the platform 12 assumes. By virtue of this display facility 102
9 and its responsive combination with the processor/computer 100,
10 the user may be able to view, on a real time basis, the path or
11 paths of movement of the platform 12, as well as the range of
12 motion of each of the manipulations which may be caused by the
13 user and/or by the plurality of drive motors 42, 44 and 46, as
14 set forth above with either of the embodiment of Figure 1 or the
15 embodiment of Figures 9 and 10.

16 Yet another structural feature of the exercise assembly 10
17 of the present invention includes the provision of a weight
18 assembly including at least one weight 48. The weight 48
19 includes an elongated connecting arm 50, and at least one or
20 more removably attached weights 52 secured adjacent the outer
21 end of the arm 50. The inner end of the arm 50 is attached
22 directly to the platform 12 and extends outwardly therefrom so
23 as to provide a variable amount of resistance force to the
24 platform 12 and to the foot 14 attached thereto, as the various
25 paths of movement are performed. The amount of resistance is of

1 course dependent, at least in part, on the mass of the weight 52
2 secured to the arm 50. In addition, the weight assembly may
3 include a plurality of other weights located strategically at
4 predetermined, spaced apart locations on the platform 12, such
5 that the aforementioned resistive force applied to the platform
6 12 may further facilitate the exercise and development of the
7 predetermined portions of the individuals body. It is
8 acknowledged that the effect of the one or more weights 48, as
9 described above, may be of maximum or more significant benefit
10 when the preferred embodiment of the exercise assembly is
11 utilized, and the manual force supplied by the user is that
12 force which facilitates the movement of the platform. This of
13 course is in contrast to the above described embodiment shown in
14 Figures 9 and 10 wherein a plurality of drive motor 42, 44, and
15 46 are utilized as described. However, it is also contemplated
16 that the existence of a plurality of the weights 48 in spaced
17 apart location relative to the platform 12 and being affixed
18 thereto can provide sufficient resistance to exercise and
19 strengthened indicated and preferred parts of the users body, in
20 either of the above noted embodiments of the present invention.

21 With reference to Figures 1, and 6 through 8, a plurality
22 of individual paths of movement are schematically represented by
23 directional arrows 72, 74, 76 and 78, as respectively
24 demonstrated in the above noted Figures. It is emphasized that
25 the directional arrow 72, 74, 76 and 78 are each intended to

1 represent one of a larger number of paths of movement through
2 which the platform 12 and foot 14 of a user may travel.
3 Naturally, these paths of movement are meant to be
4 representative only of a much larger number of possible paths
5 through which the platform 12 and foot 14 may be directed to
6 travel in order to facilitate exercise, strengthening and/or
7 rehabilitation of the individual parts or predetermined portions
8 of the foot, ankle and lower leg, as well as the various muscle
9 groups and other body parts associated therewith. Further, each
10 of the paths of travel 72, 74, 76 and 78, as well as the other
11 possible paths of travel not represented, may be performed on a
12 continuously repetitive basis in order to fully exercise a
13 particular portion of the user's body on which a particular path
14 of movement is designed to concentrate.

15 Since many modifications, variations and changes in detail
16 can be made to the described preferred embodiment of the
17 invention, it is intended that all matters in the foregoing
18 description and shown in the accompanying drawings be
19 interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense. Thus,
20 the scope of the invention should be determined by the appended
21 claims and their legal equivalents.

22 Now that the invention has been described,